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## Hanscom CGOs skydive with Army Golden Knights

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— Imagine crawling out of an airplane at 13,000 feet, gripping a single bar fastened to its outer skin and waiting, not to land, but to jump and spend the next 65 seconds plunging toward the earth at speeds averaging 125 miles per hour.

Two Hanscom company grade officers spent one November weekend doing just that.

1st Lt. Tamilyn Becker, Air Force Research Laboratory research scientist and Capt. Giesela Alpheis, Electronic Systems Center AWACS budget analyst, are both skydiving enthusiasts and teamed up with the Army Golden Knights, the elite Army skydiving team, during the Golden Knights 5th Annual Inter-service Parachuting Competition at Laurinburg-Maxton Airport in North Carolina Nov. 5 through the 8.

“This event was so amazing because it brought military members who have a passion for the sport of skydiving together,” Lieutenant Becker said.

Captain Alpheis went to the event with 29 jumps under her belt and was able to add nine more to her list.

“I did my first jump of the weekend with the 2004 Overall World Skydiving Champion,” Captain Alpheis said. “He had over 10,000 jumps and was completely down to Earth. I didn’t find out until later that he was the world champion when I saw his picture on the wall.”

Lieutenant Becker, who has been jumping for five years, had 122 jumps to her credit before the weekend and added 15 more to her count.

Jumping with the Golden Knights during a competition weekend added to the excitement for both skydivers. It also opened opportunities to make friends within the military skydiving community.

“I keep in touch with jumpers who I met at last year’s competition and jumped with them again this year,” Lieutenant Becker said.



Captain Alpheis (far left) and Lieutenant Becker (center) skydived with two members of the Golden Knights during the Inter-service Parachute Competition. (Courtesy Photo)

Jumping with the Golden Knights also meant getting world class instruction for a fraction of the cost.

“The Golden Knights are dedicated to helping others to improve and jump safely,” Captain Alpheis said. “It was also free. My nine coached jumps would’ve cost \$540 if I’d done them at a drop zone in Massachusetts.”

Experiencing the rush of jumping out of an airplane with other military members who love the sport made for a memorable weekend for both Hanscom skydivers.

“The Golden Knights are one of the top competition teams in the world,” Lieutenant Becker said. “Not only are they talented, but they are very professional when they are coaching you. From going over the skydive before getting on the plane, making sure everything is ready to go in the plane, to a debrief after the skydive is complete — they are truly an amazing group of people.”

The opportunity to jump with the Golden Knights is a benefit for military members who are certified skydivers. Both Captain Alpheis and Lieutenant Becker are certified and participate in this sport on a regular basis. @